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BERLIN: SOME NOTES ON A DEVELOPING CRISIS

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PREFACE

The following observations and recommendations concerning American responses to Soviet threats regarding Berlin are the product of a two-weeks-long seminar held by members of the Social Science Division of The RAND Corporation in Santa Monica during March 1960. During this seminar some recourse was had to gaming techniques as a means of stimulating thinking about possible future developments in the crisis. However, the following pages, which are essentially a collection of distinct though related papers, lay no special claim to validity as a result of using such techniques. They represent rather the joint considerations of a group of persons who were able to bring to bear on the problem various kinds of relevant knowledge and experience.

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THE SUMMIT AS A WATERSHED

The first, acute stage of the Soviet Union's diplomatic offensive against the protected autonomy of West Berlin ended with the expiration of the six-month time limit set in the Soviet note of November 27, 1958. Since then, the situation has been stationary, with both sides maintaining their basic position but maneuvering so as to avoid bringing the issue to a head. This stationary stage, however, is bound to end with the summit talks scheduled for May. To be sure, the talks can terminate as the Geneva Conference of the summer of 1959 did: with an agreement to disagree. But the situation in 1960 will be different; the dispute cannot remain on the pre-summit, stationary level. The Soviet Union cannot, after such an outcome, go back to its pre-summit stance. If it does not then put into effect its threat of unilateral action (conclusion of a separate peace treaty with the German Democratic Republic), the threat will have been weakened as a means of pressure. Not acting on the threat will be tantamount to a diplomatic withdrawal. Alternatively, if the Soviet Union does conclude the peace treaty with East Germany, the dispute will rise to a higher level of tension, and the Berlin crisis will again enter an acute stage.

On the other hand, in case an interim agreement on the problem of Berlin and Germany is reached at the summit, the post-summit sequel will a fortiori diverge from the pre-summit stationary situation. Depending on the terms of the interim settlement, the Western position will either be consolidated or weakened.

Possible outcomes of the summit meeting can be briefly summarized as follows: the Soviet Union will "cash in" (an interim settlement satisfying Soviet demands), "pay up" (an interim settlement satisfying Western demands), "put up" (no interim settlement; conclusion of the East German peace treaty), or "shut up" (no interim settlement, and no peace treaty).

Each of these headings covers a wide range of possibilities. The Soviets may "cash in" or "pay up" much or little; one may also think of a case in which there are mutual concessions with no net advantage to either side, though this is unlikely. If the status quo is frozen in all essentials for the duration of the interim, this is a net advantage to the West. If it is changed in a politically significant fashion, this is very likely to mean a net loss to us. One can hardly think of mutual concessions exactly offsetting each other. As to "shutting up" and "putting up," these, too, can mean many different things.

"Shutting up" can be a temporary retreat; after liquidating the present offensive, the Soviet side can revive it under more favorable conditions. "Putting up" can also have different sequels: after the conclusion of the peace treaty, the Communist side can handle the matter aggressively or conservatively.

The critical factors in determining how serious a crisis we are headed for are, first, the nature of Khrushchev's real wants, and second, the degree to which he is resolved to get them. If, for example, he is really determined to get us out of Berlin at almost any cost, and relatively soon, the situation will be critical indeed. He may, on the other hand, also be determined on the same final result, but content to ease us out over a much longer period of time. Such a situation may make for a less tense crisis but possibly also for greater difficulties to us in coping with it. Or it may be that Khrushchev is willing to settle for considerably less than our departure, even over the longer term. Whatever his present intentions and desires -- and the estimates of the seminar group place them high rather than low -- our diplomatic problem is first of all to induce him to refrain from committing himself further than he is already committed, in other words to shake rather than to increase his resolve, and second, to search for his minimum demands in a way that will cause him to reduce those demands

rather than increase them. Both these objects are pursued, we are convinced, by responses that would in general be regarded as "tough" rather than "conciliatory," since the latter would be more likely to whet his appetite than to lead to an outcome which is mutually satisfactory.

A WESTERN DILEMMA

Since the positions of the two sides are very far apart, a "negative" outcome of the summit talks (agreement to disagree) seems more likely than a "positive" outcome (an interim agreement signed and sealed). A "negative" outcome would be inevitable if either side remained adamant on its maximum position, that is, if the Soviets refused to accept anything but the free city, or if we refused to envisage any change, not only as regards occupation and access, but also as regards other matters like so-called "subversive" activities. A "positive" outcome is possible only if the Soviets agree to shelve the free city proposal, at least temporarily, and if we show readiness to discuss certain modifications of the existing "status quo." Even so, the final outcome can still be "negative."

In negotiatory situations of this sort, shifting the blame for the "negative" outcome on to the other side may be an important consideration for the bargainers. They can guard themselves against this by not looking adamant when the other side looks conciliatory (even though both may feel that no mutually acceptable solution is attainable and actually prefer a "negative" outcome).

So far, the Western position has been that the maintenance of occupation and unhindered movement of supplies and persons

were basic for us, leaving room for bargaining only on certain other matters, such as Soviet complaints about "fascist," "militarist," "disruptive" activities in West Berlin. There is a tendency in the West to consider these things secondary and negotiable, in contrast to occupation rights which are essential. The talks were conducted on this basis at Geneva in 1959.

No agreement was concluded at that time, but the very fact that the U.S. representative treated West Berlin internal matters as negotiable produced a political crisis. From the West Berlin and West German point of view, the American negotiatory attitude looked extremely disturbing. It cast doubt upon the firmness of the American resolve to defend the freedom of West Berlin. The crisis of confidence caused by Geneva subsided only when the NATO conference meeting in Paris in December 1959 reaffirmed Western readiness to defend the integral status quo in Berlin. Even if the forthcoming meetings ends without an agreement and nothing is actually "given away," some political damage is certain to be done if any part of West Berlin's internal autonomy is treated as negotiable.

The political situation shaping up at the summit confronts the West with a dilemma: we shall either appear unreasonable and bear the exclusive blame for the failure of the talks, or

be saddled with a political, moral and psychological crisis,
impairing the cohesion and unity of NATO.

THE ROOTS OF THE CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE

The dilemma is a real one; we cannot avoid undesirable consequences, no matter what course the West takes. To consider the matter only from the point of view of the cohesion of NATO, it is clear that whether we lean toward "hardness" or "softness," we can satisfy some members only at the price of dissatisfying others. The dangers of "softness," however, seem to outweigh those of "hardness." It is not likely that any ally who would prefer a more conciliatory course to the one followed by us would part company with us for that reason. On the other hand, the political, moral and psychological crisis that Western concessions at the expense of the status quo in Berlin are apt to create could well have a profoundly disruptive effect.

How can we cope with this problem?

By slicing the problem up as we have tended to do until now, into a "non-negotiable" part (Western rights) and a "negotiable" one (matters affecting West Berlin's internal autonomy), we inevitably create the impression that we are mainly interested in protecting our acquired rights and preserving orderly, legal procedures in international intercourse. The Germans' interest in the problem, however, cannot be defined in such terms. The vital question from their point of view is not whether the existing agreements will be respected until replaced by new

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ones arrived at in negotiations free from pressure, as the U.S. note of December 31, 1958, put it. It is whether they can feel confident that we shall set our seal only to such new arrangements as will effectively preserve the necessary conditions for the autonomous existence of West Berlin. We cannot create such confidence by being adamant on occupation and access alone. It is also necessary to demonstrate that we are sensitive to the economic, political and moral interests at stake in West Berlin which the occupation is supposed to protect. Granted that these interests could not be effectively protected without occupation, the value of the occupation status quo would be seriously impaired if other, economic and political components of the status quo were signed away in "free" negotiations.

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CONCESSIONS AND THEIR EFFECTS

From the Soviet point of view, too, the occupation of West Berlin is an important problem only insofar as it affects the position of the city as part of the West German currency area and economic system, and as a political outpost, an intellectual, artistic, moral and political center of democratic and humane thought and action. They seek an end to the occupation because that would ensure the attainment of their ultimate Berlin objective: the detachment of West Berlin from the West German economy which in turn would enable them to extinguish the free moral, intellectual and political forces radiating from the city. They could, however, agree to the temporary prolongation of the occupation if in return for this they obtained such concessions as the loosening of economic and political ties between West Berlin and West Germany, or the hamstringing of West Berlin political activities aiding political resistance in East Germany.

The most important short-range goal pursued by the Soviets in the Berlin dispute seems to be the closing of Tempelhof as an escape route for East German resisters. The end of the occupation and adoption of the free city plan would solve this problem automatically. Likewise, the free city plan would satisfy their basic long-range demand, the detachment of West

Berlin from the West German economy. They could, however, achieve their above-mentioned short-range goal without the immediate implementation of the free city plan, under an agreement about communist control of departure from Tempelhof. Agreements falling short of the free city plan, but loosening up West Berlin currency regulations, would enable them to make an important first step toward their ultimate economic objective; the breach could be gradually widened until West Berlin would become economically dependent on the East. The loss of political independence would follow.

Granting concessions of this sort would seem to have the following political consequences:

a. Controlling air traffic at Tempelhof. This would amount to active Western cooperation in tightening communist policy controls in East Germany. The West Berlin authorities, and their Allied protectors, would be a party to the consolidation of totalitarian police rule in the East German state. The moral-political lesson would be clear: the West is not only no longer capable of providing a haven for people in danger of arrest by the East German political police, it is so weak that it is compelled to collaborate with a totalitarian police system.

b. Economic concessions. Not only agreement to a free city plan of one or the other kind, but also concessions on the

economic ties between West Berlin and West Germany, would seem likely to be interpreted by West Berliners, and Germans generally, as the beginning of the end. Faith in the preservation of West Berlin as an autonomous entity would tend to diminish. By granting such concessions in "free" negotiations, the West would appear to be cooperating with the Soviets in the liquidation of West Berlin's freedom. As a result, the latent crisis of confidence would flare up with new intensity.

Such consequences, it seems, would inevitably result from an alleged Western plan pondered by "U.S. policy makers" according to a report in the Wall Street Journal of March 17, 1960, and described as serving "to seize the diplomatic offensive from Russia at May's summit talks."

As reported, the plan would "unite Berlin's Eastern and Western sectors in a free city, independent of both Germanies and protected by both Western and Russian troops."

Such a plan might appear to be substantially better than the Soviet free City proposal as it stands, since both the East and the West would give up something under it. East Berlin would no longer be the capital of the GDR. Moreover, our troops would stay in Berlin, -- not on the basis of the original, but under a new agreement. Western rights, then, would be strengthened; nothing "essential" would be given away, and there would be mutual concessions.

The key provision of the alleged plan, however, is that the new free city would be "independent of both Germanies." Economically, this is meaningless; a city cannot be an independent economic unit. It can only be an economically open unit, dependent on the surrounding area. Both Eastern and Western capital would share in financing its economic activities, marketing its products, and supplying its needs. Free political activities, however, could not go on unhampered on this basis. The presence of Western troops would not assure this; the weight of Eastern economic influence would make itself felt. The political, moral and cultural climate of free West Berlin would change beyond recognition. The change would be away from the West.

WHITHER GERMANY?

How would the cohesion of NATO be affected if concessions of the above-discussed kind caused a severe crisis of confidence? One might argue that even though profoundly disappointed by our handling of the Berlin problem and doubtful about the value of the alliance, the West Germans could not afford to leave NATO. Their basic problem would still be the Russian menace, and NATO would still be their only reliable protection. The loss of West Berlin, painful as it might be, would not change this.

West Germany might remain in NATO even if we make concessions on Berlin, and the smaller the concessions, the more likely that it would do so. What seems inevitable in such a case is that the quality of German cooperation and dedication would deteriorate. Changes in Germany's fundamental political orientation, however, cannot be ruled out a priori.

There are political circles in Germany holding the view that the pro-Western alliance policy of the Federal Republic of Germany exposes the country to unjustifiable war risks, and that an alternative orientation, based upon some sort of an understanding with the Russians, would give the Germans greater overall security. To date, this is a minority view. It could, however, gain much greater popular support if developments such as an unfavorable outcome of the Berlin crisis undermined confidence in the

United States and cast serious doubts upon the value of the alliance policy.

If opposition parties urging a reconsideration of the NATO policy were to come to power in West Germany, this would not automatically mean the end of the alliance. The question, however, would be on the agenda, and it would be possible for the Russians to exploit German tendencies toward a change. The Russians could use powerful blandishments -- a satisfactory modus vivendi, with guarantees for security. They could also point to a long tradition of political cooperation between Germany and Russia. They could point out that this cooperation was revived in 1922 by a German regime whose internal policies were anti-communist (Rapallo treaty). In fact, cooperation with Soviet Russia had support under the Weimar republic from both the Right and the Left.

CHANCES AND RISKS OF THE HARD COURSE

Thus far, we have been considering mainly summit outcomes in which the Soviets "cash in," or obtain significant concessions at the expense of West Berlin's autonomy. We shall now turn briefly to the other possible outcomes, predicated upon a Western refusal to grant such concessions.

Berlin's exposed and encircled position, together with the discrepancy between the ground and tactical air forces locally available to the two sides, represents a weak spot for the West. Western strategy therefore must be based upon injecting non-local, nontactical elements of strength into the dispute. This can take the form of deterrence. In adopting a strong stand, the West may try to convince the Russians that a local grab would mean much greater world tension, the revival of the cold war, and an arms race that would dislocate their economic plans based upon the expected relaxation of world tension. This prospect may deter the Soviet Union from forcing the issue, but even so, it need not induce them to "pay up," that is, fully recognize the status quo and withdraw the free city plan. If we adopt the hard course, a likelier outcome seems to be no explicit interim agreement at the summit.

Will the Soviets "put up" or "shut up" in such a case? In other words, will they conclude the peace treaty with the

East Germans or quietly drop the issue? Soviet verbal behavior during the stationary stage of the crisis strongly points to the former. Khrushchev has so often repeated his threat of concluding the peace treaty that he seems firmly committed to do this unless he has his way at the summit. Some doubt, however, may be permitted on this score. There is considerable evidence of bluffing and of startling changes of front in the record of past Soviet international behavior, the last instance being Khrushchev's flexible handling of the time limit set in the Soviet note of November 27, 1958. On the peace treaty issue, a hard stand might enable the West to call Khrushchev's bluff instead of being bluffed by him, but this seems to be an outside chance. It appears more likely that if Khrushchev gains no satisfaction at the summit, he will go ahead with his peace treaty plan, since this would still permit him to keep on playing his "relaxation" theme.

When a peace treaty is concluded, the Soviets can immediately offer the West a modus vivendi. We recognize the GDR and they will leave the Berlin question in abeyance for awhile.

The acceptance of this offer would again generate a serious crisis of confidence between us and the Germans. The question in this case is not only whether to recognize a regime to which we object because of its nature and past record. The essential

point is that recognition would amount to the denial of West Germany's basic claim in the matter of reunification. The FRG considers itself as the sole sovereign representative of the German nation as a political unit. It maintains that this claim cannot be given up in any circumstances. This implies that from Bonn's point of view any recognition of "two Germanies" as sovereign states is unacceptable, and reunification can be handled only as the recovery of temporarily occupied German provinces. If we recognize the GDR, we thereby demonstrate a complete lack of solidarity with the FRG, and the alliance will lose its political substance. If we want to keep the alliance strong, then, recognition must be ruled out as long as the FRG's position remains unchanged.

If we refuse recognition, however, an acute crisis about access to Berlin may develop. Some strategic and tactical implications of this are discussed elsewhere in this paper. Here it is sufficient to point out that as soon as the issue is handled on a purely local basis, the Soviet side must be expected to rely on its tactical superiority. A repetition of the 1948-49 airlift, that is, the collapse of Soviet blockade measures as a result of unopposed Western countermeasures, seems unlikely. The Soviets may be deterred from starting a blockade, but if they are not, it is improbable that they will refrain from interfering with our counterblockade measures.

This seems to apply to ground penetration as well as to airlift operations. Probing is unlikely to be unopposed, or opposed only in token fashion. If the Soviets are not deterred from daring us to break their blockade, it does not seem likely that they will be deterred from using their local strength in defending it.

It would not seem realistic to base our calculations upon easy air and ground victory, such as would be possible if Western forces were opposed only by GDR forces in the East German area. Refusal of effective assistance by the GDR's Warsaw pact allies (including the S.U.) does not seem to be within the realm of possibilities. The S.U. may decide not to risk a ground war over Berlin, because according to the Soviet doctrine any ground war is likely to develop into a total nuclear conflict, which the Soviet leaders may wish to avoid. If so, the likeliest Soviet course is one which avoids an appreciable risk of local ground and air conflict, that is, one which does not institute a blockade. Alternatively, the S.U. can also resort to negotiations in order to forestall the outbreak of serious hostilities. What we cannot expect is Soviet nonintervention in ground and air combats in which the GDR is being overwhelmed. Once the issue is narrowed down to tactical operations, with the decision depending only on locally available forces, the West will find

itself in a distinctly inferior position. It would be extremely imprudent for the West to handle the Berlin dispute in such a way that its whole prestige in the end would be staked on the outcome of circumscribed tactical operations in which conditions clearly favor the enemy.

It does not seem to be a promising strategy for the West to engage in a protracted series of purely demonstrative probing threats. These could serve to give evidence of Western determination and thus to maintain morale in Berlin, a crucial factor discussed elsewhere in this paper. A prolonged repetition of such demonstrations, however, would serve no useful purpose, since the more the series is prolonged, the less likely will ultimate success seem to be. Once things have reached that stage, the West's objective must be to break off a tactically circumscribed pattern of interaction in which conditions favor the enemy, and to put the encounter on a different level where nonlocal strategic strength counts.

One possibility might be that the West's forceful stand would have a marked effect upon Soviet strategic calculations and give us a stronger bargaining position. This would open the way for a relatively favorable negotiated settlement. Another possible line of action would be to fight the issue on a broader basis, raising violence to a higher level. A third

alternative would consist in not opposing the Soviet grab of Berlin beyond a certain point but in falling back upon a stronger "cold war" position. In the latter case, the S.U. would be allowed to exploit its local, tactical superiority, but the West would at least extricate its prestige from an impossible local involvement. One of the West's objectives would then be to make the Berlin issue appear, not as a test of overall Soviet and Western strength, but one of the sincerity of the Soviet Union's willingness for peaceful coexistence.

In any event, an acute struggle over access to Berlin would raise very difficult psychological, moral and political problems for the West. Western determination and the cohesion of the alliance would be put to a severe test both by transforming the Berlin dispute into a bigger, general conflict and by retreating to a strong cold war position. If the hard policy averts an acute blockade crisis, it will greatly strengthen U.S. prestige and leadership. If it leads to a difficult, unmanageable tactical situation, many voices will claim that the hard policy has been discredited. The future will then depend on whether the shock of a disappointing outcome of the Berlin dispute will have a debilitating or galvanizing effect on the West.

Throughout the above analysis, effects upon the cohesion of the Western alliance emerged as the crucial factor in the Berlin dispute. This cohesion could be impaired, it appears, by a policy of concessions giving the impression that the U.S. has insufficient understanding of the values at stake in Berlin. It could also be impaired by mounting pressure and peril and by overcommitting U.S. prestige to meet the enemy on a narrow ground where preponderant strength is on his side. The ultimate problem for the U.S. is how to use its overall deterrent strength to frustrate the Soviet Union's political maneuvers and to offset its local tactical superiority.

WEST BERLIN MORALE AS A FACTOR LIMITING WESTERN FLEXIBILITY

The Western position in Berlin depends on the positive support of the Berliners. First, we have recognized the right of the population to have a voice in their political status. Second, the administration of West Berlin is now a completely German affair, requiring more than 40,000 professional personnel, as well as approximately 80,000 non-professionals.* Western supervision is nominal. If the cooperation of the German governmental apparatus should be withdrawn, the Western powers could not administer the affairs of the city.

Because the Berliners have been staunchly pro-West ever since 1945, and because they withstood the rigors of the 1948-49 blockade so remarkably, there has been a tendency to take their support for granted. This may be a serious mistake. It is true that today they have an overwhelming preference for the status quo, as indicated by the city elections of December 1958, but it is also probable that if they feel that maintenance of the status quo is hopeless a substantial number of Berliners will rapidly reorient their attitudes. This prediction is based in part on analysis of Berlin morale when the Soviets imposed their

* Statistisches Jahrbuch Berlin, 1958, pp. 258-59.

blockade in 1948. Until the Western powers showed that they were willing to make an all-out attempt to supply the city by an airlift, a large proportion of the population was resigned to life under Soviet rule.*

Later surveys have tended to strengthen the thesis that popular morale in Berlin is largely dependent on confidence in Western intentions to defend the city.** Berliners watch Western actions very closely for signs of intent on the part of the U.S. and its allies. If they see, or think they see, small indications that the West is prepared gradually to divest itself of occupation responsibilities in Berlin, morale will start to crumble. So far no substantial sector of Berlin opinion has questioned Western ability to defend the city if the democracies really want to do so.

The crumbling of morale will not take place all at once, or in all sectors of the population equally. Rather, those groups whose resistance to communism is already weak will tend

* The Berlin Blockade: A Study in Cold War Politics, The RAND Corporation, Report R-302, by W.P. Davison, September 1957, Unclassified, pp. 132-141.

** "The German Crisis: A Field Report, January-February 1959," The RAND Corporation, Research Memorandum RM-2340, by H. Speier, W.P. Davison and L. Gouré, March 20, 1959, Official Use Only, pp. 48-50; "Supplementary Notes on the German Crisis," The RAND Corporation Research Memorandum RM-2407, by W.P. Davison, July 1, 1959, Official Use Only, pp. 15-23.

to grow in size and influence. One of these groups, now very small, is made up of right-wing elements who feel that they can "do business" with the Communists. Another, much larger and more influential, is composed of left-wing Social Democrats who are not necessarily pro-communist, but who feel that realism compels them to come to terms with the communist order in East Germany. They also regard the Soviet Union and the United States as standing on the same moral plane. These left-wing Social Democrats now exercise a dominant influence in the party's youth organization, have great influence in the trade union structure, and are represented in the City Assembly. Mayor Brandt has been able to exclude them from the principal Social Democratic Party offices, but they remain a powerful minority in the party hierarchy. Out-and-out Communists are few, and probably do not comprise more than two per cent of the West Berlin population.

Both right-wing and left-wing "soft" elements can be manipulated by the Soviets and their East German agents. Business people can be promised good contracts and opportunities. Leftist Social Democrats can be offered political concessions that make it look as though they were more capable of dealing with the Communists and better able to extract favorable terms from them than Mayor Brandt and his middle-of-the-road allies.

Another way the Communists can manipulate West Berlin morale is by threatening to sever the escape route to West Germany. A serious threat to interfere with civil air service from Tempelhof to West German airports, for instance, would certainly start a stream of pro-West refugees from the city. However, communist threats are not likely to have a pronounced effect, nor are their efforts to strengthen their right and left-wing collaborators likely to be very successful, as long as confidence in the intentions of the West remains unimpaired. If doubts about the reliability of the Western powers should become widespread, the opposite would be the case.

Western concessions of the type offered the Soviets at the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers in 1959 would probably not in themselves result in the collapse of pro-West morale in Berlin. Mayor Brandt would be able to maintain his grip on the municipal and Social Democratic Party machinery, a majority of Berliners would support him, and he probably would be able to win the next West Berlin elections. However, these initial Western concessions could be expected to reduce the size of Brandt's following substantially, to cause an increase in the tempo of flight to West Germany, and to strengthen the hands of his opponents inside and outside his own party. If, within the next one or two years, there were signs that the West might

be willing to make further concessions with regard to Berlin, then it is possible that pro-West elements would lose control of the city, or that Mayor Brandt himself would be disenchanted with us and seek to revise his position.

Loss of confidence in the West would set the stage for events such as the following:

1. Anti-West demonstrations would take place. These would remain small as long as the police were under the control of pro-Brandt elements, but would be supported by trained communist agitators.
2. Neutralist and pro-communist elements would gain control of the Social Democratic Party machinery and the labor union machinery.
3. Elements in favor of closer relations with the Communists would increase their representation in the City Assembly and eventually would be able to form a temporary majority.
4. The present majority of the City Assembly would split and a substantial segment of it would go over to the neutralist, pro-communist side.

Once a temporary majority in the West Berlin City Assembly had been formed by neutralist and pro-communist elements, one could expect them to request that the Western powers leave the city.

Counter-concessions from the Soviets would offset the effects of concessions to the Soviets only under certain conditions. If the counter-concessions applied to the situation in Berlin itself, or the supply routes leading

to it, then they could be interpreted as meaning that the Western powers were still intending to defend the city and would tend to sustain pro-West morale. If, however, the counter-concessions were in another area -- for example, disarmament or prevention of surprise attack -- then the Berliners might well conclude that the West was willing to trade the freedom of West Berlin for advantages elsewhere.

The dynamics of Berlin morale thus introduce serious limitations on the flexibility of Western diplomacy. Concessions with regard to conditions in the city that are intended to be limited or temporary may set in motion a process that will make it impossible for the West to retain any foothold in Berlin at all. The problem involved in making concessions to the Soviets is not only to keep these as small as possible, but also to convince the Berliners that concessions are not the beginning of a trend.

Under certain conditions the size and composition of Western occupation forces in Berlin may be of more than symbolic significance. If, for instance, anti-Brandt elements should gain temporary or partial control of the West Berlin police force or of certain departments of the city government, the presence of adequate occupation forces might make it possible for the mayor to hold the line until he could rectify the situation. A force of ten to fifteen thousand occupation troops would

probably be able to police the city, at least temporarily, and thus prevent Communists or other anti-Western elements from assuming control by "cold" means. Similarly, a number of military officers trained in civil government functions might be able to assist moderate German authorities in retaining direction of municipal offices in a crisis. An Allied force of substantially the size of the present contingent in Berlin, augmented by a number of officers with training in civil government, might thus make it possible to recoup a temporary set-back. If there should be a complete collapse of pro-West German elements, however, the Western powers would have no choice but to withdraw.

WESTERN NEGOTIATING TACTICS AT THE SUMMIT: SOME PROBLEMS AND
SOME SUGGESTIONS

A. Past Western Negotiating Tactics (Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers)

At the Geneva Conference of Foreign Ministers, the Western negotiators stated their "maximum" demands and positions in the opening stages, argued for them briefly, and then proceeded rather quickly to propose compromise formulas. During the course of the Conference they yielded some further concessions. Though they remained firm on essential matters, the trend of their behavior was consistently towards a progressive weakening of their original position.

So far as is publicly known, the Western negotiators did not attempt to combine the "stick" with the "carrot." In trying to bring the Soviets to an agreement they offered progressively more attractive proposals on Berlin. There was nothing to induce the Soviets to accept these proposals out of fear that they would face serious costs and risks if the Berlin crisis were allowed to continue indefinitely or to worsen.

B. Negotiating Tactics

At the Summit the Western negotiators will probably again attempt to offer proposals for an interim solution of the Berlin issue. The Soviets will for their part press us to make greater concessions, without being in any hurry to resolve the Berlin

crisis by yielding very much themselves.

It is possible, however, that through appropriate negotiating tactics we can increase the chances of Soviet acceptance of Western proposals. The rationale behind the tactics suggested below is as follows:

- (a) In any negotiation with the Soviets it is important to avoid appearing too eager to reach an agreement, since such eagerness represents to them a disposition to make important concessions.
- (b) If we want our proposal accepted it is necessary to convey the impression that the alternatives are for them less attractive than acceptance of our proposal. This can be done before and during the negotiations by openly or implicitly indicating measures available to us that the Soviet Union would dislike to see us initiate, like substantially increasing our military budget. Intensive exploration of such measures by us is perhaps the most important work we can do in preparing for any negotiations.

C. Proposals on Negotiating Tactics

1. The Western negotiators can secure more serious consideration of their proposals during negotiations by refraining from showing steady progress towards a weaker position. They should instead alternate "conciliatory" positions with "hardness."

This can be done in various ways:

- (a) Once rejected by the Soviets, the West's proposal can be withdrawn, thus making it clear that concessions offered at one moment cannot be taken at a later point in the negotiations as having already been granted. (This is, in a sense, what the Western powers did last December when they made it clear that negotiations and bargaining at the Summit would not begin where the Geneva Foreign Ministers Conference had left off, that is, with the concessions offered at that time and rejected by the Soviets.)
- (b) When a Western proposal on Berlin has been discussed and is rejected by Khrushchev, the Western leaders can propose that the discussions move to some other subject. The effect of this tactic on the Russians would be increased if the topic for discussions suggested by the Western leaders were something less important than the Berlin issue -- e.g., the matter of increasing cultural exchanges -- or one on which it was less urgent to reach an agreement.
- (c) When a conciliatory proposal has been rejected, the Western leaders can return to a harder position on Berlin -- for example, by indicating that a continuation of the status quo is satisfactory to them and

may after all be the only practical thing to do in view of the inability of the two sides to agree on an alternative arrangement acceptable to both.

- (d) Faced with a rejection of their own conciliatory proposal, the Western powers should refrain from suggesting still other possibilities; rather, they should call upon the Soviets to come up with new proposals of their own.
- (e) Western leaders can react to Soviet rejection of the maximally conciliatory Western proposal by warnings of penalties to the Soviets if they carry out their threats to sign a separate peace treaty with the East German regime. (see 2 below)
- (f) Western leaders can state (threaten, or imply) that rejection of their "final" offer means that the conference will come to an end and result in failure, at least insofar as the Berlin issue is concerned.

2. In order to deter the Soviets from carrying out their threatened action and to induce them to modify their objectives, the West must demonstrate its resolution to resist imposition of the unacceptable Soviet solution to the Berlin crisis. The West can do this by indicating that it is prepared to extract important costs from the Soviets and subject them to uncomfortable

risks if they insist on implementing their threats. For example:

- (a) The West can warn the Soviets that it would resist by appropriate local means any East German "interference" with the freedom of West Berlin and our communication lines to that city. Even though the Soviets are locally superior in power, they must have a great reluctance to use force against us in view of the risks and penalties that would involve.
- (b) The West should not rely on this local threat alone but should also threaten broader political consequences of a global character should the Soviets proceed to implement their threats. These would include not only a substantial increase in the U.S. military defense budget, but also a further strengthening of NATO forces, both nuclear and conventional, and new impetus to the existing arms race, etc.

3. The likelihood of influencing the Soviets to abandon the course of action they have threatened will be strengthened if at the Summit Western leaders combine the "carrot" with the "stick." Thus, the President can speak of the possibility of partial disengagement and de-nuclearized zones, a willingness under the right conditions to be "flexible" in the Quemoy-Formosa matter, etc. Depending upon the estimate of how much

of a carrot is needed, one or more of these items can be mentioned merely as possibilities towards which the U.S. would be favorably disposed were its requirements on the Berlin issue to be satisfied, or presented in more concrete but still conditional form.

4. Either the "carrot" or the "stick" approach by itself is likely to be ineffective. Thus, if the West tries to rely primarily on the "carrot," the price will be more than we can or ought to pay. Reliance solely on the "stick" may require a larger stick than the West can agree upon or can credibly threaten to use. On the other hand, it may be possible to influence the Soviet decision on Berlin by the combination of a smaller "carrot" and a less threatening, but still potent "stick."

THREE REASONS FOR STRONG WESTERN DETERRENCE EFFORTS AT THE SUMMIT

There are three important reasons why the West should exert maximum pressure at the Summit in order to test Soviet resolution and deter them from implementing their threats.

1. The chief tactical problem for the West in this crisis is to test Soviet resolution without thereby increasing and strengthening it. It is possible, of course, that the Soviets are already fully determined to get West Berlin, preferably without raising tensions but if necessary by harsh measures, whatever their costs and risks. In this case, the tactical problem mentioned above does not arise, for Soviet determination is already at its maximum. On the other hand, the Soviets may want West Berlin badly but may not yet have decided what level of costs and risks they are willing to accept for this objective. Or they may be indeed determined but on the assumption that it would be a relatively low-cost and low-risk venture.

Unless the Soviets are fully determined to get Berlin at whatever cost, which is most unlikely, the timing and character of Western measures to test Soviet resolution have to be carefully selected to refrain from hardening that determination. One way to accomplish this is to see that our measures are taken in good time, before the Soviets have committed themselves

to an irreversible course like the signing of a separate peace treaty with East Germany. Western failure to take or threaten energetic counter-measures encourages the Soviets to proceed, and the signing of a separate peace treaty limits their own ability to retreat. It becomes even more difficult for them to retreat if they have been encouraged by our lack of reaction to proceed with some East German interference of our communications to Berlin. It would certainly be difficult for them to renege on their pledge to come to the assistance of the East German government if the Western allies tried to force their way to West Berlin.

This is not to say that the Soviets would lose all flexibility of action once they signed the separate peace treaty, or that they would no longer be able to maintain a line of retreat. Nor does it say that the Western powers should not test Soviet resolution even after the signing of a separate peace treaty. It only argues that it is both more effective and also safer for the Western powers to exert maximum pressure to test Soviet resolution and to discourage it before they implement the first of their threats.

2. For the Soviets to sign a separate peace treaty with the East German regime without first entering into a satisfactory arrangement with the Western powers on West Berlin and

its communications with West Germany must be overtly regarded as an extremely grave and ominous action. It must be given out that the West would be forced to reconsider all its estimates of Soviet intentions and many of its own recent political and military policies. Among possible courses of action are: strengthening our military posture and that of NATO, speeding up nuclear sharing with some NATO countries, taking all necessary decisions for placing SAC on a continuous airborne alert as soon as possible, increasing our military forces in Berlin, and taking a hard and dubious new look at the advisability of signing a nuclear test suspension agreement.

3. A relatively hard Western position on Berlin at the Summit meeting and a strong effort to test Soviet resolution recommends itself as our best policy also on the ground that we are interested in finding out as quickly as possible whether the Soviets are bluffing and how determined they are to get us out of West Berlin. For the sooner the West learns how far the Soviets mean to go on the Berlin issue, the sooner it can draw appropriate conclusions about the meaning and price of "peaceful coexistence." It is, in other words, not necessarily to our advantage to postpone a crisis which becomes inevitable at a later date.

THE STRATEGIC BALANCE AND THE BERLIN CRISIS

U.S. and S.U. beliefs about the shifting strategic balance have already played a role in the onset and development of the Berlin crisis. They could become critical in influencing the behavior of the two sides in this conflict.

It is quite possible that the Soviets will make further efforts to convince the West that Soviet second-strike retaliatory capability is so strong that it should deter the U.S. from entertaining any thought of "massive retaliation" in the event that a local clash over Berlin takes place. For it is only under the protective shield of strategic deterrence that Soviet policy and diplomacy can exploit fully and with relative safety the advantages of geography and superior local military capabilities which it enjoys in the Berlin situation.

Confidence in strategic deterrence of the opponent is just as essential for U.S. diplomacy in the present crisis. Not only must the U.S. strategic posture deter the Soviets from initiating all-out war, in the event the Berlin crisis gets out of hand, it must do so in a way which gives our leaders and peoples and those of our allies strong confidence in strategic deterrence of the S.U.

Any uncertainty and lack of confidence in our strategic deterrence of the Soviets in a deepening crisis would make us

less willing to defend our interests by means which require us to take certain risks, and more ready to make important concessions. This would be true even if the Soviets did not attempt to play upon these fears, but it cannot be expected that they will show such restraint. In fact, signs to the contrary are already present. In his speech to the Supreme Soviet in January, Khrushchev claimed not merely that Soviet retaliatory strength deterred the West from initiating war, he also broadly implied that the U.S. was vulnerable to a Soviet first-strike,* which is to say to Soviet "massive retaliation."

Many possibilities for undermining U.S. and allied confidence in strategic deterrence of the S.U. are open to Khrushchev. Additional demonstrations of Soviet ICBM capabilities can be arranged to suggest that operational deployment of these weapons has taken place on a large scale. Pictures of missile sites can be published in newspapers. Representatives of third countries, can be taken on a tour of Soviet missile bases and allowed to report back to their governments and to the world

* See "Soviet Strategic Ideas, January 1960," Unclassified, by H. S. Dinerstein, Research Memorandum RM-2532, The RAND Corporation, February 16, 1960, and "Khrushchev on Current Soviet ICBM Capabilities," SECRET by Myron Rush, Research Memorandum RM-2555, The RAND Corporation, March 15, 1960.

what they have seen. Soviet leaders can make explicit statements concerning the number of operational ICRM's, etc., etc.

These means of demonstration and disclosure are not without certain disadvantages and risks to the Soviets, but they may calculate that on balance the advantages outweigh the disadvantages.

In any case, at some point in the Berlin crisis it may be felt necessary to shore up confidence in the ability of the U.S. strategic forces to deter the Soviets. Measures may have to be taken to reduce the vulnerability of SAC to a possible Soviet first-strike and to convey in unmistakable terms that the U.S. is capable of delivering a powerful retaliatory blow.

A variety of measures to this end are possible, among them dispersal of parts of SAC to civilian airfields and the institution of a continuous airborne alert. It is important to recognize that a deterioration of the situation which creates such a requirement could occur quickly. Further, it is equally important to recognize that many of the most effective measures to safeguard our confidence in strategic deterrence require considerable preparation and involve fairly long lead times. This is the case even for measures which fall under the category of "emergency" or crisis steps, such as dispersal and the airborne alert. Such measures are of maximum utility to the U.S.

only if the capability for putting them into effect already exists, so that they can be put into operation swiftly whenever a crisis threatens or whenever it becomes politically urgent to do so in order to shore up Western confidence in its strategic deterrence of the S.U.

Some degree of dispersal and airborne alert is possible, of course, even without better preparations than now exist to acquire these capabilities. But it is likely to be inadequate and entail undesirable costs and risks. An airborne alert, for example, is much more valuable politically if it can be maintained over a long period of time, for the diplomatic crisis may be a prolonged one. If our capability is only for a short-duration airborne alert, we are likely to be reluctant to institute it unless an actual attack is feared.

A POSSIBLE SOVIET TACTIC IN THE BERLIN CRISIS: A BLOCKADE
LIMITED TO AIR TRAFFIC

The Soviet Union and the East German authorities have been insisting on limiting the altitude of Allied air traffic in the air corridors to Berlin. They have furthermore claimed sovereignty for East Germany in the air space over East German territory and have warned that they would exercise this sovereignty when the Soviet Union signed a separate peace with East Germany. These current Soviet-East German tactics and claims appear designed to establish a basis for interrupting the air traffic to Berlin.

It is often assumed that if the Soviet and East German authorities institute a blockade of West Berlin, they will concentrate primarily on stopping the ground traffic to West Berlin and would limit interference with air traffic to electronic jamming, since use of other measures would appear too aggressive. However, serious consideration should be given to the alternative possibility that in a crisis the Communists will force a cessation of air traffic alone without interfering with ground traffic. Such interference with air traffic could be accompanied by demands:

- a. For direct negotiations with and recognition of the East German government.

b. For all Western planes, in the absence of an agreement, to land for control purposes at East German airfields.

The use of such tactics could give the Soviets and East Germans some important gains:

1. Since the ground traffic would not be interfered with, the risk of strong Allied reaction would be relatively low, and such a reaction could be further deterred by Communist threats making the continuation of surface communications conditional on Allied submission to the air blockade. The Communists would thereby avoid the onus of instituting a full-scale blockade of Berlin.

2. Allied submission to a blockade of the air traffic would inflict a serious political defeat on the West and serve as a test of Allied resolve to uphold their rights as well as cast doubt in the minds of West Berliners and West Germans on the willingness of the Western powers to protect Germany against Communist encroachment.

3. Since the air route is the only way for many West Germans and West Berliners to avoid East German checks which could threaten their personal safety while traveling to and from Berlin, the blockade of air traffic would probably seriously affect the morale of West Berliners. The threat alone of such a blockade could lead to a large-scale evacuation of the city by many Berliners.

4. For the same reason, the air blockade would deter East Germans from defecting to West Berlin, since they could not rely on air transportation to remove them to the safety of West Germany.

5. This tactic could be envisaged as forcing the Allies to negotiate with the East German authorities, thus recognizing the East German regime. Short of this, the East Germans may secure agreement on the part of some Western commercial air lines to land on East German airfields or use East German fields in Berlin as an air terminal, thereby preserving their control over the air traffic and increasing pressure on the West for recognition of the East German regime.

The relatively low flight ceiling currently insisted upon by the East German and Soviet authorities in the Berlin air corridors, if it continues to be observed by the Allies, might facilitate the implementation of passive and active Communist blockade measures. It is also possible that the current Allied reactions to these Communist claims is viewed by the East Germans and Soviets to be in the nature of a test of the risks involved in instituting an air blockade in a crisis. It is quite possible that the Soviets and East Germans believe that if the Allies are not prepared to enforce their rights in respect to flight altitudes in the Berlin air corridor prior to

a worsening of the crisis, they can be deterred from doing so once the crisis is at hand.

TASKS OF PUBLIC INFORMATION IN CONNECTION WITH
THE BERLIN SITUATION

Negotiations regarding the future of Berlin and Germany will create a requirement for a vigorous public information program. The principal tasks of such a program would be: to win support in the Western democracies for a firm diplomatic stand over a long period of time; to counter Soviet efforts to separate West Germany from her allies; to enlist the support of leaders in the uncommitted countries; and to help convince the Soviets that the Western powers are serious about maintaining the freedom of West Berlin.

At the present time, public opinion in the Western democracies is relatively poorly prepared to support a strong diplomatic position over an extended period. There seems in particular to be little awareness of (a) the tremendous long-term political significance of the issues involved, (b) the likely effects of minor and seemingly "reasonable" concessions to the Soviets, (c) the probability that negotiations on Berlin will be long and hard, and (d) the extent of the Western moral obligation to do everything in its power to preserve freedom in Berlin and eventually to secure German reunification in freedom.

In connection with the approaching round of negotiations, U.S. spokesmen should be ready to point out again and again that

the future of the Western democracies may be intimately bound up with what happens at the bargaining table. Any attempts to minimize the seriousness of the Berlin situation are likely to play into Soviet hands.

In order to emphasize the importance of events in Berlin, the Western powers may wish frequently to focus public attention on the city and on the significance of what happens there. For instance, Berlin may be built up as a test case of Soviet good intentions. Khrushchev has repeatedly stated that he favors peaceful coexistence and reduction in international tension. If he is serious about these objectives, he will have to demonstrate his good faith by helping to preserve the peaceful coexistence of East and West in Berlin. The democracies may also wish to focus attention on Berlin by holding important international gatherings there, by stationing high-ranking officials in the city, and by continuing to encourage visits to Berlin by well-known personalities. So long as the Russians do not relinquish their pressure, Berlin should be made to assume the character of "capital of the crisis."

Soviet efforts to turn opinion in the democracies and in the uncommitted world against Adenauer and West Germany appear to have enjoyed some success. To combat this Soviet tactic it is desirable that repeated demonstrations of the solidarity of

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other democracies with Adenauer's Germany be arranged. Gatherings of Western diplomats in Bonn or Berlin could help to serve this purpose.

The task of winning the leaders of uncommitted nations to support the position of the West on Berlin is important partly because it is possible that the issue will be debated formally in the United Nations. Unfavorable reactions from the world body could be highly damaging to the Western powers.

Efforts to acquaint leaders of these nations with the Berlin issue should include continuation and intensification of the policy of encouraging Berliners to travel abroad, and of bringing Africans, Asians, and possibly South Americans to Berlin. Information on the German situation that is directed to these areas could emphasize the colonial character of East Germany. Africans and Asians might be reminded that the principal communist leaders in East Germany are mostly Soviet-trained and that some of them are Soviet citizens. Economic exploitation of East Germany by the Soviets could also be pointed out, as well as the fact that the Soviets have never dared to allow free elections in East Germany. It can be explained that West Berliners refuse to become part of East Germany because they do not want to come under Soviet colonial domination. The Germans are asking merely for the same right that is being demanded by peoples all over the world: the right of self-determination.

The most important task for public communications in connection with the German situation is to help convince the Soviets that the Western powers are serious in their intention to maintain freedom in Berlin. This task cannot be achieved in an information program by itself; what the West does is far more important than what it says. Nevertheless, public communications can do at least a part of the job. Statements by Western leaders to their own publics emphasizing the importance of the Berlin issue and the necessity for a firm stand will have some effect on the Soviets, since Moscow apparently does not wish to arouse public opinion in the democracies to greater defense efforts. The Soviet strategy appears to require a Western relaxation of effort. Indications that Western public opinion is becoming exercised about Berlin may help to persuade the Soviets to soften their demands.

Public communications can also help to offset events and statements that the Soviets might interpret as indicating a softening in the Western position. For instance, if the President should visit Moscow following intransigent behavior by Khrushchev at the summit conference, this might very well give rise to Soviet hopes that the United States was still considering a retreat. In such instances, public communications can serve an important function by putting such events in context

and by emphasizing that willingness to explore every avenue to peace does not mean readiness to surrender our positions. Western press comment advocating compromise by the democracies is also likely, insofar as it is not contradicted by authoritative statements, to encourage the Soviets to hope for a softening of the Western position.

A central component in any information program on the German situation should be the illegitimate and unpopular character of the East German regime, and the need to extend democracy to all Germany. Emphasis on conditions in East Germany will tend to have a special meaning for each audience. For citizens of democratic countries it will help to explain the determination of Berliners to remain free. For East and West Germans it will emphasize that the West understands their desire for reunification. For peoples in the uncommitted nations it serves as a reminder of colonial conditions in East Germany. For the Soviet leaders it means that by bringing pressure on West Berlin and thus focusing attention on Germany they are making it easier for the West to raise embarrassing questions about the Soviet grip on East Germany. These questions also have the effect of encouraging East Germans to hope for ultimate freedom and to make political and economic consolidation of the communist grip on East Germany more difficult.

In short, the Soviets are more likely to relinquish their aggressive policies if they become convinced that as a result of those policies in Germany they are arousing public opinion in the democracies to support greater defense efforts, consolidating the Western alliance, losing good will in the uncommitted nations, and focusing attention on the illegitimacy of the East German regime. It was essentially developments of this nature that led Stalin to lift the Berlin blockade in 1949. A well-worked-out program of public communications can play a part in convincing the Soviets that the cost of taking Berlin would be unacceptable this time also.